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Bibliographical Reflections—Postscript On Copyright Data

By Denis R. Rogers



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #233

BUFFALO BILL BORDER STORIES

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Bibliographical Reflections—Postscript On Copyright Data

By Denis R. Rogers

At the risk of being accused of stating the obvious I must stress that copyrights are intended to protect the rights of their owners. That point is important since, without a grounding in the history of copyright development, the bibliographical researcher cannot expect to make the most effective use of the records that have flowed from the copyright laws passed over the years.

The story of copyrights is a fascinating subject in its own right and I can recommend to readers the article by Mr. G. Thomas Tanselle, now Vice-President of The Guggenheim Museum and a fellow HHB member, entitled: "Copyright Records and the Bibliographer," which was published in "Studies in Bibliography. Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia" (Volume Twenty-two : 1969 : Pages 77 to 124 : The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.).

The first Federal Copyright Law was passed in 1790 (1 Stat 124), although each of the twelve States making up the Union at that time had passed its own law between 8 January 1783 (Connecticut) and 29 April 1786 (New York). I do not propose, however, to say anything about those laws, since it seems unlikely that DNRU readers will be researching authors, whose works were published before 1798.

The Federal Law passed on 31 May 1790 provided three steps to assure a copyright, namely:—

- (1) Deposit before publication of a printed copy of the title page with the Clerk of the District Court for the area in which the author (or copyright proprietor) lived;
- (2) The text of the Clerk's registration to be inserted, within two months, in at least one United States newspaper, where it was to run for a period of four weeks;
- (3) Deposit of a copy of the work in the Office of the Secretary of State within six months of publication.

The term of copyright was fourteen years, renewable for another fourteen years, if the same procedure was carried out within six months of the expiration of the original copyright period.

An Act of 29 April 1802 (2 Stat 171), to take effect from 1 January 1803, required all copyrighted works to carry a printed note of the date of the entry, either on the title page or on one of the two following pages—the verso of the title page was the publisher's usual choice. That provision has been retained in all subsequent copyright legislation and so remains in force at the present time.

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On 3 February 1834 the first general revision of the copyright law was passed (4 Stat 436). The new measure revised four aspects of the 1790 Act, namely:—

- (1) The copyright term was increased to twenty-eight years, with the renewal period remaining at fourteen years;
- (2) The newspaper notice was required only for renewals;
- (3) Deposit copies were to be provided to the Clerk of the District Court instead of the Secretary of State and within three instead of within six months of publication;
- (4) The Clerks were to send deposit copies and certified lists of all titles entered to the Secretary of State at least once each year.

An Act of 10 August 1846 (9 Stat 106) provided for the submission of extra deposit copies—one to the newly created Smithsonian Institution and another to the Library of Congress. Then an amendment, dated 5 February 1859 (11 Stat 380), repealed those new deposit regulations and transferred copyright administration from the Secretary of State to the Department of the Interior; previous records and deposits were moved to the Department and all future ones were to be sent there.

Finally, on 3 March 1865 an Act (13 Stat 540) once more required the provision of a second deposit copy to the Library of Congress and, now, within one month of publication.

This takes us up to the Copyright Act of 18 July 1870, which marks the commencement of a new copyright era and so this seems to me to be the proper point to pause and consider the value of the records covering copyrights up to that time for the bibliographical researcher.

As set out above, the outline is not a little confusing, and so I am taking the liberty of reproducing Mr. Tanselle's admirable summary of the different requirements between 1790 and 1870.

- 1790-1851: One copy to the Secretary of State within six months of publication.
- 1831-1846: One copy to the District Court (for transmittal to the Secretary of State) within three months of publication.
- 1846-1859: Three copies; one to the District Court (for transmittal to the Secretary of State) within three months of publication; one to the Smithsonian Institute; and one to the Library of Congress.
- 1859-1865: One copy to the District Court (for transmittal to the Department of the Interior) within three months of publication.
- 1865-1870: Two copies; one to the District Court (for transmittal to the Department of the Interior) within three months of publication; and one to the Library of Congress within one month of publication.

Mr. Tanselle also mentions three attempts made during this period to provide a published account of copyright deposits, but, having regard to the limited scope of this article, I do not propose to set out the details; they can be found in Mr. Tanselle's study in depth.

The record of deposit copy receipts by the prescribed depositories are now available in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress and are more or less complete. From the point of view of HHB members, in view of the fact that few if any of us have much interest in works published before, say, 1860, the most serious gap is that of the Department of the Interior (Patent Office) records from 28 April 1859 to 5 July 1870.

Aside from the deposit copies of the works themselves there are two places to look for deposit dates of books published between 1859 and 1870,

namely the District Court Record Books and the Registers of Copyrights received by the Department of the Interior (Patent Office). For the years 1865 to 1870 there is a third source, which is the Registers of Copyrights received by the Library of Congress, all now housed in the Library of Congress' Rare Book Division.

When your editor and I visited Washington we had a very clear idea of what we were seeking. Briefly our aim was to locate the entries for works by Edward S. Ellis, published between 1859 and 1870, including works of related Ellis interest, and, perhaps, to uncover entries for hitherto undiscovered (by us, anyway) Ellis items.

Therefore we took with us lists of all his major works already known to have appeared during the years in question. These we had arranged by publisher and area (i.e., a list for New York, another for Philadelphia, a third for Boston and a fourth for all other locations). Each list was set out in chronological order, with the fullest title known, the probable publication date and abbreviations for the names of the publishers, where known.

The results were disappointing. No hitherto undiscovered Ellis items were brought to light and, also, many of the titles on our check lists were not found.

Perhaps I should say at this point that shortage of time, combined with the laborious chore of leafing through the unindexed record books, limited our search to the record books of the Southern District Court of New York and so I cannot be sure that that particular Court was typical. I can see no reason to think, however, that it was the odd Court out, so to speak, and, of course, if success had crowned our search, we would have made time to look at the records for the Eastern Districts of Philadelphia and for Boston, which were the other big publishing centers of the time. Incidentally a very brief check of one of the Eastern District Court of Philadelphia's record books, made several years later, proved no more fruitful.

Particularly interesting was the discovery that the number of titles on our lists, for which no entry was found, increased as the years went by. Thus in 1861 we found 80% (8 of the 10 titles listed), whereas in 1869 we found only 7½% (3 of the 40 titles listed).

It was suggested to us that the falling off in entries was a leading reason for the passing of the 1870 Copyright Act, but that does not explain the causes of the falling off. The specialists on copyrights in the Library of Congress felt unable to pinpoint any one reason and it seems unlikely that, after so many years, a satisfactory solution to the mystery will be forthcoming.

A specific example may serve to illustrate the limitations of the District Court records. One of the purposes of our search was to locate the entries for the 48 or 49 issues of the American Novels, not only as a verification aid to the probable publication dates, but also to determine the full titles of the numbers not seen, namely Nos. 22, 37 and 49. In the case of No. 22 the only known surviving copy lacks the title page, as well as the wrapper; in the case of No. 37 no surviving copy has been found; and, of course, it remains uncertain whether No. 49 was ever published.

No entries were found for numbers later than 6; moreover a check (kindly undertaken for my benefit) of the Eastern District Court of Philadelphia records and of the loose title pages (now kept in 92 boxes) by Mr. Beck of the Library of Congress' Special Collections Division failed to uncover anything for "The Hunters of Ohio" (37-1AN).

Our experience leads me to suggest, therefore, that a search of the Dis-

trict Court Record Books should not be attempted on the off chance of uncovering something new about your favorite authors works. If you know precisely what you are looking for, then a search may be justified, but do not approach the search with extravagant hopes, for it IS a laborious task and disappointment looks more probable than success.

One puzzle did emerge, which seems worth mentioning. Nearly all the surviving copies of the American Novels carry the printed note of the date of the title entry, as required by the Act of 29 April 1802, on the verso of the title page. The puzzle is why this data was shown, when no copyright had been made. It might be suggested that, perhaps, the entries were made in other District Courts—e.g., that for the Eastern District of Philadelphia, which covered Trenton, N.J., where Edward S. Ellis was living at the time No. 37 of the American Novels was issued—but, if so, why do the printed notices of other Ellis titles in the series refer consistently to the Southern District Court of New York, which was the area where the publisher's offices were located? Was it fear of being called on to make good the omission to enter? Was it a pretense of copyrighting by the publisher in order to discourage other publishers from pirating the work? Or was it a confusion, with the author assuming that the publisher had copyrighted the works and the publisher assuming that the author had effected the District Court entries? Confusion seems impossible, seeing that Ellis was both publisher and author in some instances.

A suggestion by Mr. Tanselle strikes me as offering the most logical explanation of this puzzle and of the falling off in entries referred to above also. It is that publishers were lax about following through on the procedures for entering their publications in the Copyright record since, after all, the notice of copyright in the published book is the announcement of a copyright claim and registration becomes significant only in case of a suit for infringement.

The attractiveness of Mr. Tanselle's idea is enhanced by the fact that, in the years that we studied, not only did the number of titles for which no entry was found increase, but also the number of entries for which there is no record of receipt of the deposit copies required to complete the copyright registration also increased.

The copyright records will not provide much, if any help with serials. That is because serial titles were copyrighted separately only rarely, the normal practice being to copyright the issue in which the serial appeared, thereby securing protection for the whole contents. As copies of many of the issues of periodicals and, in particular, newspapers published prior to 1870, have not survived, it is probable that some stories and sketches by your favorite author have been lost forever, especially if he was a prolific writer.

Four entries in that period, which came to light during our search of the Southern District Court of New York's record books, should perhaps be placed on record. They were made by Irwin P. Beadle & Company (the original name of the famous firm before Irwin and Erastus Beadle parted publishing company) and cover the following series titles:—

Entered on 6 October 1860

Beadle's Dime Biographical Library.

Entered on 21 November 1860

Beadle's Ten Cent Popular Biographies.

Beadle's Ten Cent Library of Biography.

Beadle's Dime Popular Biographies.
Beadle's Dime Biographies.
Beadle's Dime Library of Biography.
Beadle's Ten Cent Biographies.
Beadle's Half-Dime Novels.
Beadle's Half-Dime Romances.
Beadle's Five Cent Romances.
Beadle's Five Cent Novels.

Entered on 22 November 1860

Beadle's Half-Dime Novelettes.
Beadle's Ten Cent Biographical Library.
Beadle's Five Cent Novelettes.
Beadle's Dime Novelettes.
Beadle's Ten Cent Novelettes.
Beadle's Dime Library of Romance and Story.
Beadle's Ten Cent Library of Romance and Story.
Beadle's Five Cent Library of Romance and Story.
Beadle's Half-Dime Library of Romance and Story.

Entered on 21 January 1861

Beadle's American Library (One Dime : The Choicest Works of the Most Popular Authors).

From those entries I deduce that the Beadle brothers (a) started with no fixed ideas about series titles and/or (b) early on had ambitious plans for expansion from their initial Dime Novels base. Anyway the entries demonstrate a clear intention to protect themselves against potential competition by making a copyright corner in series titles. These protective copyrights look of dubious value, however, as they certainly did not prevent Irwin Beadle from using the family name after he had parted company with the original firm.

1870-1909

Mr. Tanselle cites the Copyright Act of 8 July 1870 (16 Stat 212) as a landmark in American copyright legislation, in that it provided for the centralization of copyrights in the Library of Congress. That change created uniformity and, because the former District Court records were transferred to the Library of Congress, created a central point for the maintenance and preservation of copyright records from earliest times.

Although the overall concept of American copyright was not altered, there were alterations in emphasis. The following is a summary of the provisions of the Act:—

- (1) The term of copyright was to be 28 years, renewable within six months of expiry for 14 more years;
- (2) Newspaper notices were required only for renewals and had to be printed for a period of four weeks within two months of the date of renewal;
- (3) A printed title page was to be deposited BEFORE publication;
- (4) Two copies of the work were to be deposited (i.e., mailed) within ten days of publication.

Prima facie these rules enable the bibliographical researcher to establish the probable publication date of a work more accurately than prior to July 1870.

At this point various amendments enacted between 1870 and 1909 had better be mentioned. A revision, dated 1 December 1875 (Rev. Stat 957), did not alter the entry and deposit requirements, but an Act, dated 3 March 1891 (26 Stat 1106) called for the two deposit copies to be placed in the mails for deposit not later than the day of publication. Of course this provision reduced still further the legal interval between the date of entry (which could be as late as the day of publication) and the date of copy deposit.

This 1891 Act also imposed a duty on The Librarian of Congress, which was to prove of tremendous bibliographical importance, namely "to prepare and print, at intervals of not more than a week, catalogues of such title-entries . . ." This provision was introduced to facilitate the enforcement of another clause in the 1891 Act, which required editions of foreign works published in the U.S.A. to be printed from type set within the limits of the United States or from plates made therefrom, before reciprocal copyright protection was accorded to them. I mention this to illustrate that the copyright legislation was always enacted for the benefit of the copyright proprietor; consequently any bibliographical benefit arose more or less inadvertently—in this case the complete publication of the American copyright record for deposited works from 1891 onwards. That factor is stressed to underline the importance of a sound general understanding of the history of copyright legislation in making full use of the rich legacy of bibliographical material to be found in the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress.

Our editor, who has assisted my researches at the Copyright Office—now located in the James Madison Building, adjacent to the mail Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.—has suggested that the most effective way of introducing readers to use of the copyright records would be to relate our experiences. It is true, of course, that my interest in the writings of Edward S. Ellis is a specialist one, but Eddie felt that a description of our hunt for data on the works of one of the most prolific authors of the period would produce as useful a guide to the pleasures and frustrations of research at the Copyright Office as could be devised.

As a curtain raiser, so to speak, I think you should know about the published records, since a study of them, where they are available, could save you valuable time when you visit the Copyright Office.

(A) Specialized

- (1) Dramatic Compositions copyrighted in the United States : 1870 to 1916 (2 Volumes : Government Printing Office, Washington : 1916-1918).

This catalogue is arranged by title, but there is also an index of authors and of copyright claimants. The entries give the date of registration and deposit and the copyright serial number. The catalogue is complete in that it includes deposits of unpublished typescripts of plays. For example there are entries for plays based on works by Edward S. Ellis and Horatio Alger Jr., and also one play by each of those authors. Most large libraries have reference copies of this work.

- (2) Motion Pictures : 1894 to 1912 by Howard Lamarr Walls (Identified from the records of the United States Copyright Office : 1953).

This compilation proved a disappointment from the point of view of locating the material for which T. E. Edison & Co. and The Eastern Film Corporation paid Edward S. Ellis during the years 1912 to 1915 inclusive. That is because the slim book comprises an alphabetical index by title, giving the date, the copyright claimant's name and the copyright number only, plus an index by copyright claimant, which also does not cite the author or scenario writer's name.

(B) General**(1) Catalogue of Title Entries : July 1891 to June 1906 (47 volumes).**

The Catalogue of Title Entries is not widely available, so far as I am aware. When I wished to study the work with a view to facilitating research at the Copyright Office during the brief times available to me in Washington, D.C., I was surprised to find that no set was available in either the British Museum here in London or The Boston Public Library, Massachusetts. I think this was due to an oversight so far as the British Museum was concerned for, as soon as I made an application to borrow The Catalogue of Title Entries on International Library Loan, a microfilm was purchased by the British Museum in Boston, Lincolnshire, England and then sent to my own reference library in Bromley, Kent, where I am writing this article, for study purposes.

The bibliographical value of The Catalogue of Title Entries increased as changes were made in the layout. The following summary (as set out by Mr. Tanselle) makes this clear:—

No. 1 to No. 227 (1 July 1891 to 4-9 November 1895)—the titles were listed in one column and the names of the copyright proprietors in another, but in no particular order and with no specific dates, although it was a logical conclusion that deposit took place during the week covered by the issue.

No. 228 to No. 322 (11-16 November 1895 to 30 August-4 September 1897)—books arranged alphabetically by proprietors in each issue.

No. 323 to No. 326 (6-11 September to 27 September-2 October 1897)—specific date of receipt of deposit copies recorded.

No. 327 to No. 339 (4-9 October 1897 to 27 December 1897-1 January 1898)—books arranged alphabetically by authors, followed by an index of proprietors.

No. 340 to No. 347 (3-8 January to 21-26 February 1898)—registration number as well as deposit date recorded.

With No. 348 (26 February-5 March 1898) the specific date of the title entry, as well as the deposit date was recorded.

(2) Catalogue of Copyright Entries : July 1906 onwards.

The Catalogue of Copyright Entries divided the data into four parts—books, periodicals, musical compositions and fine arts. So far as books are concerned there are author-proprietor indexes for each half of the year from July to June.

I think it is correct to say that the Public Libraries in most large cities in the United States will have runs (probably complete) of the Catalogue of Copyright Entries. Therefore, as the data provided is complete, we can now concentrate on the records at the Copyright Office for the transitional period from July 1870 to June 1906 and tell you about our experiences in researching them.

(1) Record books covering the period 1870-1909.

These contain the basic copyright record, showing the entry date, the name of the claimant, the deposit date and a transcript of the title page. From July 1870 to December 1897 there were four entries to the page and therefore only one entry to the page. The entry numbers ran consecutively from the start of each year and had a letter (A through C2) appended to designate the year. From 2 January 1900 a new series of volume numbers began, with separate volumes for the four classes. The copyright numbers

were now consecutive, without annual restriction, and were prefixed by the legend : XLC : standing for Twentieth Century.

Assignments of copyright were entered in a separate series of record books, starting on 25 July 1870, but renewals of copyrights were not recorded separately.

(2) Card Indexes.

There are two distinct periods, namely from 1870 through 1897 and from 1898 to 1937.

In the index covering the period from 1870 to 1897 the entries are under copyright claimants, authors and titles. The entries under authors and titles were not always made, however, and so the index is not complete. Moreover the cards rarely give more than the copyright registration number; consequently the index is only the key with which to locate the desired copyright entry in the Record Books.

The index for 1898 onwards is divided according to the various classes and the cards contain the same information as that entered in the Record Books. Moreover there are two parts to the index—claimants and authors.

From what has been said above, the reader will have realized that the most potentially rewarding field for copyright research is the period from 1870 to 1898 and there it was that we began our search, starting with a check of the 1870-1897 index, with reference to Edward S. Ellis, some of his pen names and certain publishers.

It has to be admitted that we did not start "blind," inasmuch as we had no less than fifteen titles of unlocated Ellis titles, many of which had been supplied to me by my good friend and fellow HHB member, Mr. Stanley Pachon, who, I believe I am correct in saying, had obtained them from the late Ralph Adimari, with some, but not complete information.

At the same time we seized the opportunity to check out and record all the copyright entries for Edward S. Ellis, for the simple reason they might provide useful guidance to the probable publication dates—important where only the year of publication has been established and it is intended to compile the bibliography of your author's works in chronological (as near as possible) sequence.

Of course it must be agreed that, sometimes, the date of publication did not approximate to the date the writing of the book was completed. Moreover it must be admitted, also, that the date of copyrighting is not a conclusive guide to the probable date of publication.

When used, however, in conjunction with other bibliographical sources, such as the publisher catalogues in The Publishers' Trade List Annuals and the record of new publications in The Publishers' Weekly, copyright dates enable the bibliographer to reduce the risk of chronological error to a minimum.

My chronological list contained 367 major works by or probably by Edward S. Ellis, which had been published between July 1870 and June 1909. We located and copied the copyright entries for the original editions of 124 titles. A breakdown of those 124 copyrights and of the remaining 243 titles, for the original editions of which copyrights were not found, appears to me to be of some general significance.

	(A) The 124 titles	(B) The 243 titles
(1) Dime Novels -----	18	51
(2) Serials -----	22	170
(3) Books -----	79	20
(4) Miscellaneous -----	5	2
(5) Totals -----	124	243

Dealing first with the tiny miscellaneous classification, it can be said that this covers one drama, four musical compositions, one health pamphlet and one poem, specially written for a masonic occasion so copyrighting or absence of copyrighting is of no particular significance.

The general significance of the fact that nearly three times the number of dime novels were not than were copyrighted appears to be that the copyright records are not a promising field for finding so far unlocated dime novels written by your favorite author.

The general significance of the almost eight to one excess of original serial editions not discovered in the copyright records over copyrights of such editions, which were found, is even more discouraging for the researcher seeking works of an author hidden in periodicals.

On books the chances of finding unlocated works in the copyright records is brighter. That is especially so since the twenty titles, for which no copyrights were found, included no less than eleven titles which, although first published in book form in the U.S.A., were in fact reprints of tales for the very young that had been published originally as serials in the English story paper, "Little Folks." Additionally one other was a key to a school text book and another was a presidential election campaign guide.

It seems likely that a fair number of the one hundred and seventy serial titles were copyrighted as part of the issues of the periodicals in which they had been published. Serials appeared in anything from two to a dozen different issues and each issue was copyrighted separately. We did not consider it practicable, therefore, in the limited time at our disposal to check the copyright records for the issues of the periodicals containing the instalments of the serials, especially as the index cards were not infrequently far from easy to decipher.

Of course from July 1891 onwards the published records are a great help. If one can believe, however, that they are indeed complete, it appears that many publications, such as the Maine mail order papers, were not copyrighted by their proprietors.

Anyway, for our purpose, namely establishing the chronological order of first publication, the copyrightings of serials are unimportant, seeing that the dates of issue of the numbers containing the first instalments are nearly all known. That being the case we had few regrets in leaving periodical copyrights uninvestigated.

Our check of the copyrights of eighteen unlocated Ellis items provided valuable information as the following analysis shows:—

- (a) titles traced to a definite periodical—2.
- (b) titles copyrighted by The American Press Association, a literary syndicate—2.
- (c) titles found to be inaccurate—1.
- (d) titles copyrighted as designs and described as "photograph on title"—2.
- (e) titles traced to a definite publisher—1.
- (f) titles that did not provide any clue to the possible source of publication—1.
- (g) titles copyrighted as newspaper and magazine articles—3.
- (h) titles identified with published words under similar or different titles—2.
- (i) titles of which the copyright led to the subsequent location of the published work—4.

Two of the four titles included in (a) above proved to be a single work, with one title as the main and other as the sub-title of the serial.

(to be continued)

The Family Story Paper—Shakespeare

By Lydia S. Godfrey

If twentieth century Madison Avenue advertising executives ever think they invented the first successful give-away programs to promote sales, they would do well to refresh their memories by reading nineteenth century dime novels, in general, and the **Family Story Paper** of Norman Munro, in particular. For, in the dime novel world, if anyone ever mastered the art of "give-aways"—"premiums" as they were delicately called then—it was Norman Munro. Nobody—but nobody—appeared to give away so much with the éclat and flourish of Norman Munro. You name it; he said he gave it.

A month after starting the **Family Story Paper** in 1873, Munro discovered the promotional possibilities of his first give-away, the chromo or engraving. His initial picture was one of Charlotte Temple, who had been, in 1791, the heroine of a story by Susannah Rowson, an early writer of American literature, whose work was then appearing in the **Family Story Paper**. "Gratis! Gratis! Gratis!" shrieked its pages as Munro urged readers to buy his tenth issue, one which would be accompanied with "a magnificently colored portrait" of Charlotte and her "wonderfully spiritual face." The chromo was said to be "fine in conception" and "glorious in execution." (1) Munro's readers became entranced, and sales increased. Consequently, as always happened in the dime novel world, rival publishers soon followed suit, chromo give-aways became standard promotional fare, and publisher after publisher boasted of their chromos as "first-class works of art." (2)

Never one to remain idle, Munro, in between chromos, spurred his story paper sales by other dazzling give-aways. There was a reprint of something that looked like Queen Victoria's journal from the Scottish highlands; there were also money prizes, Oride watches, grand pianos, and parlor organs. "Only think!" exclaimed the **Family Story Paper**, neatly patting itself on the back, "A fine Piano one week, and a Parlor Organ the next for solving a puzzle! Surely such liberality was never before displayed by the publisher of any paper." (3)

By far the biggest and longest promotional give-away campaign Norman Munro ever waged, however, was on behalf of William Shakespeare. From mid-December 1876 through mid-October 1877, Munro waged the most publicized advertising campaign Shakespeare had ever had in four hundred years. (4) Bold face banners screamed across the top of page one:

Shakespeare Free to All!

No Extra Charge for Shakespeare!

For the next year, Munro promised readers of the **Family Story Paper** all of Shakespeare's works, divided neatly into forty-four parts. They were to come weekly with issues of the **Family Story Paper** and, at the end of the year, one could stitch all the parts together and own Shakespeare's "complete works" in a bound and "ornamental" volume. Munro suggested a leather cover, which, of course, he could supply for \$1.50. (5)

Carefully Munro explained to his readers why he was giving them such a "noble gift." It was because the **Family Story Paper** was "high-toned, instructive, interesting, always aiming to make its patrons wiser and better." So enthusiastic was Munro about his project that, at times, he became quite possessive about Shakespeare, referring to him as the "**Family Story Paper Shakespeare**." (6) Eventually as circulation increased, Shakespeare became the story paper's own "Immortal William." (7)

The **Family Story Paper** prided itself enormously on its magnificent work

in bringing Shakespeare to the people. Amidst its constant reminders, "No Extra Charge for Shakespeare," the paper continuously told its readers how wonderful it was. "Never in all the annals of literary journalism," it announced, as it gave away **Family Story Shakespeare, Part Three**, "has there been such a rush for any weekly paper." Such appreciation on the part of its readers, the paper claimed, was a "flattering return" for its own "enormous expense." (8) The following week the paper reported the demand for the weekly issue was so great that its facilities were "taxed to the utmost," and its presses had to run constantly day and night. Heroically, the paper emphasized the struggle was worth it. ("Remember: Shakespeare is Free to All!")

Even the words of Macbeth were used to celebrate the **Family Story Paper's** happy predicament. Just as Macbeth had cried, "Still They Come!" as he saw Macduff's army approaching, so exclaimed **Family Story Paper** referring to orders it had received from all over the country for **Family Story Paper and Shakespeare combined**. "Decisive in action, unlike Macbeth, Munro delighted in out-Shakespear Shakespeare. An army, in numbers they [subscribers] come," he proclaimed, "and unlike the sanguinary Thane, we do not tremble at their approach. Nay we hail them." (9)

The paper saluted "**Family Story Shakespeare**" as nothing less than a "Glorious achievement." (10) Munro boasted ecstatically about what he was doing: "It is assuredly a good work to place in the hands of almost every man, woman and child in the U.S. a copy of the great plays—the masterpieces of the Augustan Age of English dramatic literature." (11) When asked in letters from subscribers if **Family Story Paper** really planned to publish ALL of Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, and poems, Munro replied, "Emphatically yes." (12) By May 1877 he reported, "Our good work goes bravely on. . . . We are now, to use a term of the turf, on the homestretch." (13) The paper spoke of its "liberal task" in continuing to publish Shakespeare as regularly "as the rising and setting of the sun." (14) By July it announced modestly that the "literary merit" of the paper now stood "second to none in the country." (15) A month later **Family Story Paper** reminded its readers that it had devoted many months and almost \$100,000 "in actual money" to give Shakespeare to the people. (16)

When the last supplement of "**Family Story Shakespeare**" appeared on 15 October 1877, however, it contained an index to "all the plays, poems, and sonnets in the volume," a suggestion, perhaps, that there were other works in other volumes.

Munro's promotional gimmicks continued over the next twenty years. By the end of the century **Family Story Paper** had mastered even the coupon give-away so that in 1898-1899 the right assortment of coupons published in the paper could win readers: thimbles, steel scissors, a thousand genuine pen wipers, one thousand two blade steel pearl-handled ladies pen knives, two \$500 upright pianos, a thousand Dewey hat pins, a thousand Dewey watch charms and ladies bangles ("made from steel recovered from the wreck of the Maine,") (17) and sixty ladies Ingersoll bicycles. (18) No matter how grand all these later give-aways were, however, nothing ever quite equalled in length, duration, or intensity the "literary merit" of the "**Family Story Paper Shakespeare**" promotional campaign.

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Footnotes

1—**Family Story Paper**, 8 December 1873, p. 4.

2—**Fireside Companion**, 3 June 1878, p. 3, see as an example.

- 3—Family Story Paper, 13 April 1874, p. 9.
- 4—Mary Noel, Villains Galore, p. 128.
- 5—Family Story Paper, 18 June 1877, p. 8.
- 6—Family Story Paper, 8 December 1876, p. 4.
- 7—Family Story Paper, 15 January 1877, p. 4.
- 8—Family Story Paper, 1 January 1877, p. 4.
- 9—Family Story Paper, 22 January 1877, p. 1.
- 10—Family Story Paper, 12 February 1877, p. 4.
- 11—Family Story Paper, 26 February 1877, p. 4.
- 12—Family Story Paper, 9 April 1877, p. 4.
- 13—Family Story Paper, 14 May 1877, p. 4.
- 14—Family Story Paper, 28 May 1877, p. 4.
- 15—Family Story Paper, 2 July 1877, p. 4.
- 16—Family Story Paper, 27 August 1877, p. 4.
- 17—Family Story Paper, 23 December 1900, p. 1.
- 18—For these items see Family Story Paper issues for: August through December 1898, October through December 1898, December through January 1899, February through April 1899, April through July 1899, and October through December 1899.

NEWS NOTES

The prices realized on the auction sales advertised last issue are as follows: Hunting the Spy Skies, \$21; Ned, Bob and Jerry, both at \$15 each; At the Defense of Pittsburgh, \$21; Tom Swifts, the 5 at \$20 each; Frank Fairweather's Fortunes, \$10. Many thanks to all who bid.

The Yellowback Library's Issue No. 16 features articles on Don Winslow, the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew and Jesse James. Of major importance is the article by Geoffrey S. Lapin about the true authorship of the Nancy Drew stories. The Yellowback Library is available from Gil. O'Gara, 2019 S. E. 8th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50315.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS, ETC.

WAS HE HALF HYPE OR SHEER HERO? BUFFALO BILL TAKES A NEW BOW, by Jim Doherty, Smithsonian, January 1983. A review of Buffalo Bill's career. Very well done with no errors of fact noted. Buffalo Bill is being resurrected. A society devoted to his memory is being formed. An exhibition called "Buffalo Bill and the Wild West" has made a limited tour of the country with stops at Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, Denver and Oakland. (Article sent in by Harry L. Lane.)

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358 James L. Evans, Dept. of English, Pan American Univ., Edinburg, Texas 78539
359 Janet Marten, 2241 Imperial Lane, Apt. #4, Green Bay, Wis. 54302
360 Tom Buchholz, 1007 S. Glendora Ave., West Covina, Calif. 91790

NEW ADDRESSES

- 195 Donald F. Elder, 98 Marlborough St., Apt. #2, Chelsea, Mass. 02150
124 Carl O. Thieme, 210 Fairfield Dr., Dyersburg, Tenn. 38024
188 Laris M. Bullock, 4205 West Norfolk Rd., Portsmouth, Va. 23703
12 Clyde Wakefield, RFD, Milan, N. H. 03558
81 Floyd I. Bailey, 7605 Portman Ave., Ft. Worth, Texas 76112

LETTER

Did Bowling Green ever send you a review copy of Yesterday's Faces, Vol. 1? They were supposed to. They move so sluggishly, however, that you may be still waiting. Your encouragement and help, so kindly extended and so much appreciated, sort of God-fathered this effort. You read over my shallow, if well-meaning reviews of a couple of the more accessible dime novel series, and didn't toss them back with a half amused grin. You published that piece on the pulps and expressed interest and support, when, for years, I had been given the run-around on the manuscript, the "You know how it is" answer from people who kept the manuscript a year or two, under the pretext of publishing it. And only disgoring it when forced to.

There was plenty of that. Proving Ed Hagemann's point that the amateur press is nothing to get involved with.

You were different. You were helpful beyond all necessity. You put yourself out, reviewing a not very well spelled manuscript and tweaking away at some of the large knots of errors. You accepted the effort as serious, in spite of its dubious potential, and that's all any reasonable man could have asked. It was more than enough.

My warmest personal thanks to you.

Sincerely, Bob Sampson

Ed. Note: Copy was received and is announced in this issue of the Roundup.

A DIME NOVEL COLLECTORS BOOK SHELF

YESTERDAY'S FACES. A Study of Series Characters in the Early Pulp Magazines. Volume 1—Glory Figures, by Robert Sampson. Bowling Green University Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403. \$20.95 cloth bound, \$10.95 paper bound. After a number of so so publications in their series on popular culture of the past, the Bowling Green Press has scored high with Bob Sampson's first book of a series on pulps. Mr. Sampson traces the ancestry of pulps to the dime novels and gives excellent word portraits of Nick Carter, Ted Strong and many other dime novel characters. He has captured the essence of the dime novel hero as few modern culture historians have been able to do in recent publications. I highly recommend this book to all dime novel collectors and anyone interested in the popular "literature" of the 19th century.

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8. New Nick Carter Weekly, by J. Randolph Cox
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